

World hopes for Scottish coarse fishing water

James Dornom from Currie near Edinburgh won silver in the Celtic Cup coarse fishing match organised by Dunfermline-based Gus Brindle at Strathclyde Loch, and vastly experienced angler Ben Roberts firmly believes that the water could become a venue for European and world coarse fishing events.

Roberts (pictured) was team manager for the Welsh team edged by Scotland at the venue in the Celtic Cup last weekend, but he is enthused by the lake and the surroundings.

The man from the Principality should know as he fished for Wales three times in the world championship as a junior and has been a member of the senior team since 2003.

In total, the estate agent, who works with Keystone at Connah's Quay, has been involved in 19 events of European and world pedigree.

He believes Scotland have a 'hidden gem' and would have a great chance of hosting a major fishing championship in the future as none have been held in the United Kingdom since 1994.

The Welshman acknowledged that this would be a major

undertaking, starting with a promotional video, and the Scottish Federation for Coarse Angling (SFCA) would then require backing from the local authority, North Lanarkshire Council, and also the Scottish Government.

But he is confident of success, and is willing to assist any bid, if it can be put together. If successful, around 180 top anglers from around the Continent, and possibly further afield, could come to Lanarkshire.

Strathclyde Park is a multi-sports activity centre and lies in the valley of the River Clyde and is already one of the most popular family attractions in the Central Belt of Scotland.

Its eight-lane rowing course has hosted Commonwealth Games rowing events in 1986 and 2014 plus the world and European championships as well as the world under-21 championships.

Other activities hosted include music festivals, fireworks events and guided nature walks and Roberts said: "I have been to many venues throughout Europe and this one, without doubt, fits the bill.

"A major, hurdle, of course, is getting local authority and Scottish Government support, but there is no doubt that this venue has the infrastructure to host a major event.

"There are lots of hotels in Motherwell, Hamilton and Glasgow which is what you need. I could not believe it when I arrived at the water and looked at it."

A massive plus, according to the Welshman, is the tarmac path which runs for four miles around the park, and there are plenty of car parks.

He added: "The only question I had (before the match) was: 'Could it fish well?' It did. The returns were good and anglers who fished it, and those watching on social media from around Britain, were full of praise for the venue."

There were, plenty of roach on offer, and the loch is also believed to hold bream and skimmers, but a stocking programme ahead of a major event would be a real bonus.

That would take a cash investment, but he added: "There has not been a major world or European competition in Britain since 1994 and I believe that Scotland could have a major chance of pulling it off because of that.

"The average entry for major European and world events is around 150 but I have seen up to 200 anglers in some however, I would think that 30 teams with five anglers in each may be tempted to Scotland if they get the go ahead."

He added: "Events of major status not only bring prestige but they also bring cash to the local economy, more cash comes in than is normally put out, and there are so many possibilities here."

The Waterports Centre on the site, which hosts training conferences and business meetings, accommodating up to 50 delegates, is a bonus and there are areas where he believes temporary seating can be installed. Some venues on the Continent, he said, attract thousands to the matches.

Anglers at international level carry a range of equipment and getting that bankside needs transport, but Roberts said: "The road which goes around Strathclyde can't take two vans, but as the European Championships are in June and the world championships are in September, the grass either side should be hard enough to support van movements.

"Anglers don't want to push their heavy carts to their pegs and a one-way system could be developed to drop gear off at the different pegs.

"It would also be good if a fence or something could be put up just behind the anglers as they don't like taking their poles apart twice if they can avoid it. Overall, this venue has just

about everything needed.”



MEDAL WINNERS: left, Ben Young (bronze), Matthew Powell (gold) and James Dornom (silver). Courtesy of Christopher Paton and SFCA